

Message Text

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45

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ADP-00 SSO-00 INRE-00 EUR-25 EB-11 FAA-00

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INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15

RSR-01 /126 W

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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9410

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

USINT CAIRO

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

USMISSION USUN NY

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, IS

SUBJECT: ISRAELI REACTIONS TO INTERCEPTION OF LEBANESE AIRLINER

REF: TEL AVIV 6345

1. ISRAELI COMMENTATORS AND EDITORIALISTS AUGUST 14 CONTINUE TO ASSESS IMPACT OF AUG 9 INTERCEPTION OF LEBANESE AIRLINER, AND CRITICISM IS GROWING SHARPER. COMMENTATORS GENERALLY AGREE THAT AUGUST 9 ACTION HAS WEAKENED ISRAEL'S MORAL POSITION IN INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, PARTICULARLY IN SPHERE OF PROTECTING INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION FROM TERRORISM. ALTHOUGH THERE IS AGREEMENT THAT UNUSUAL MEASURES ARE NECESSARY TO DEAL WITH INDIVIDUALS SUCH AS HABASH, COMMENTATORS STATE THAT GOI MADE MISTAKE IN THIS INSTANCE IN MEANS IT EMPLOYED AND THAT ISRAEL AND NOT ARABS WILL BE LOSER IF SUCH ACTIONS SHOULD BECOME THE NORM.

2. FAIRLY TYPICAL IS ARTICLE BY DAVAR'S MILITARY AFFAIRS REPORTER. HE STATES THAT ISRAEL WILL FIND IT DIFFICULT TO EXPLAIN WHY IT
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RESORTED TO AN ACTION THAT IT HAS CONSISTENTLY CONDEMNED AND AGAINST

WHICH IT HAS SOUGHT SUPPORT OF INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY. OBSERVING THAT IT IS HARD TO SHOW THAT WHAT IS TO BE CONDEMNED AS AN ACT OF TERRORISM BY OTHERS IS NOW PERMISSIBLE AS AN ACT OF ANTI-TERRORISM BY ISRAEL, CORRESPONDENT SAYS THAT ISRAEL'S EFFORTS IN INTERNATIONAL BODIES FOR STRONG AND EFFECTIVE MEASURES TO DEAL WITH INTERFERENCE WITH CIVIL AVIATION HAVE BEEN SERIOUSLY WEAKENED. ARTICLE CONCLUDES THAT ALTHOUGH ISRAEL'S ACTION MAY HAVE BEEN MILITARILY FEASIBLE, GOI HAD FAILED TO PUT PLAN TO TEST OF POLITICAL WISDOM.

3. HAARETZ WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT FENYVESY REPORTS THAT ISRAEL'S ACTION IS POLITICALLY FRAUGHT WITH DISASTER AND COULD CONTRIBUTE TO A REASSESSMENT OF US SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL. STATING THAT WAR AGAINST TERROR REQUIRES UNCONVENTIONAL MEANS, FENYVESY SAYS THAT ATTEMPT TO OBTAIN RESULTS IN DISREGARD OF INTERNATIONAL LAW IS NOT WORTH THE COST. ISRAEL HAS PREJUDICED ITS CLAIM TO WORLD SYMPATHY IN CASE OF HOSTILITIES AGAINST CIVIL AVIATION AND AFFAIR MAY BECOME SYMBOL OF CONFRONTATION BETWEEN LEGALITY AND ILLEGALITY.

4. IN LATEST EDITORIAL THIS SUBJECT, HAARETZ TAKES LINE THAT IT HAS BECOME CLEAR THAT SENIOR MINISTERS IN GOI MADE SERIOUS MISTAKE IN DECIDING TO INTERCEPT LEBANESE AIRLINER. HAARETZ PRAISES RARE PRECEDENT OF UNEQUIVOCAL CRITICISM OF INCIDENT BY ISRAEL PILOTS ASSOCIATION, NOTING ITS MEMBERS ARE ALL FORMER IDF PILOTS, AND CONCLUDES THAT SOME GOOD MAY COME OUT OF INCIDENT WHICH HAS HARMED ISRAEL IF RESPECTED GROUPS LIKE IPA SPEAK OUT AGAINST UNWISE DECISIONS BY GOI.

5. AL HAMISHMAR COMMENTATOR BELIEVES THAT GOI WAS BLINDED BY OPPORTUNITY TO CAPTURE HABASH AND HIS COHORTS, AND EXPLOITATION OF THIS OPPORTUNITY WAS DONE AT EXPENSE OF ISRAEL'S PRINCIPLES. IN LOOKING AT BALANCE SHEET AS RESULT OF ACTION, COMMENTATOR SAYS IT QUITE CLEAR THAT ISRAEL HAS COME OUT A LOSER: MORAL BOTTOM HAS DROPPED OUT OF ISRAEL'S DEMAND TO LIBERATE CIVIL AVIATION FROM TERROR, AND ISRAEL HAS CREATED PRECEDENT OF A STATE CARRYING OUT AN ACT OF HIJACKING HAS SHOWN DISREGARD FOR INTERNATIONAL LAW AND TREATIES, AND HAS LEFT ITSELF OPEN TO COUNTERACTION BY ARAB COUNTRIES WHICH WILL BE DIFFICULT TO CONDEMN BECAUSE OF ISRAEL'S PRECEDENT.

VELIOTES

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